



Vol. 514 Rs. 29

# Tales of Durga



Amar Chitra Katha: the Glorious Heritage of India





# Tales of Durga

Goddess Durga is as widely worshipped as Vishnu and Shiva. She is the fierce form of Devi who, as Shakti, is considered the personification of universal energy. According to the Devi Bhagavata the Universe is but Her manifestation – and even Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva worship Her. Durga is worshipped in sixty-four forms as Ambika, Kali, Chamundi, Devi, Uma, etc.

The worship of Durga is supposed to be more than 4,000 years old in India. The names of Uma and Parvati occur in the Taittiriya Aranyaka and the Kena Upanishad. Some Indologists are of the opinion that the figure seated on a lion in the coins of Azes I, the Shaka ruler (c. 5 B.C. to A.D. 30), represents Ambika or Durga.

Durga is worshipped in one form or another in almost every Indian village.

This Amar Chitra Katha is based on the Durga-Saptashati of the Markandeya Purana.



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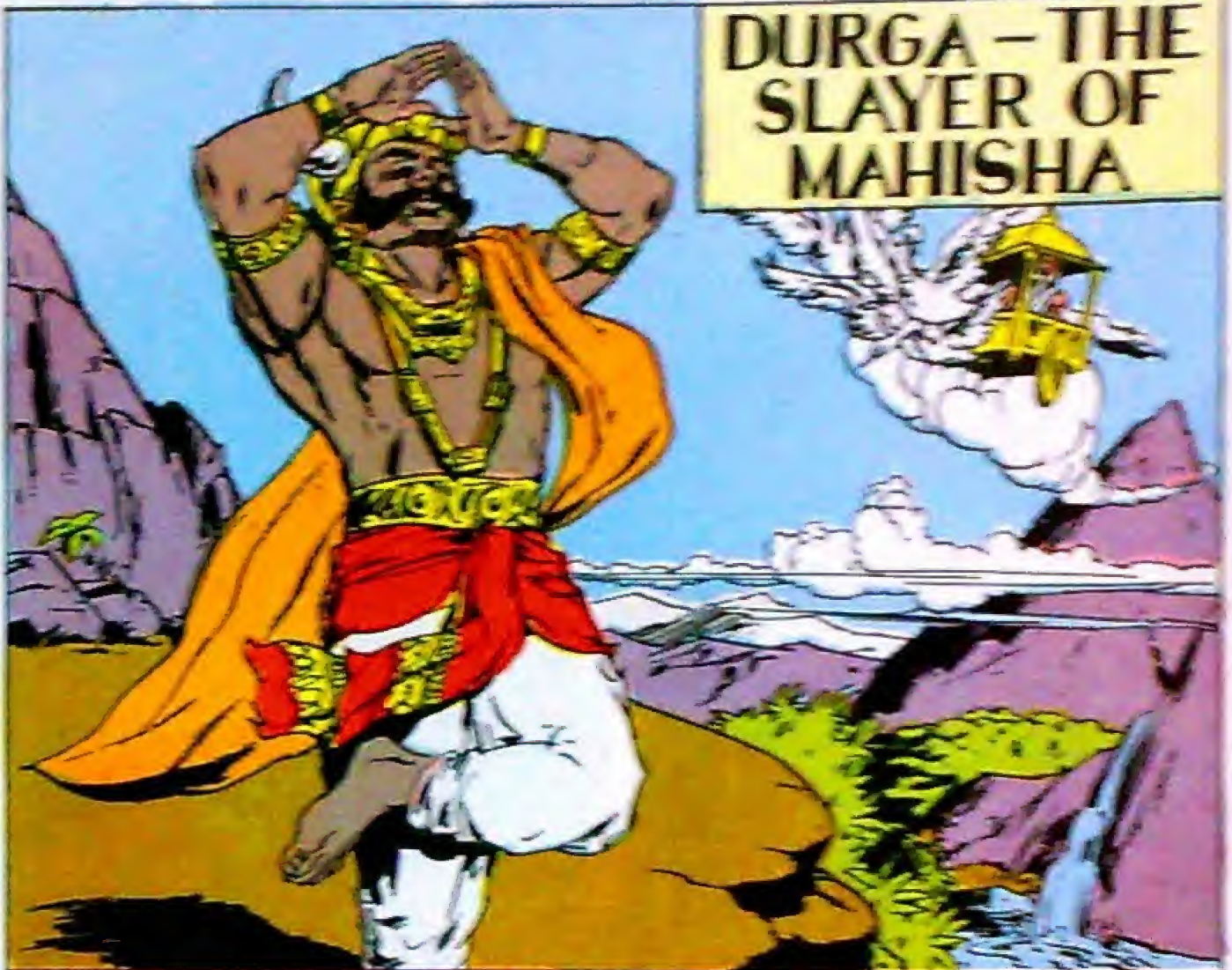
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# DURGA - THE SLAYER OF MAHISHA



THE ASURA, MAHISHA, ONCE PERFORMED SEVERE PENANCES TO PROPITIATE BRAHMA. PLEASSED WITH HIS AUSTERITIES, BRAHMA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.



LORD,  
MAKE ME  
IMMORTAL.

ALL WHO ARE  
BORN MUST DIE.  
YOU CANNOT  
ESCAPE DEATH.

MAHISHA BECAME THOUGHTFUL.



WHAT SHALL I  
DO? HAVE I PERFORM-  
ED ALL THOSE  
PENANCES FOR  
NOTHING? AH!  
I HAVE IT!

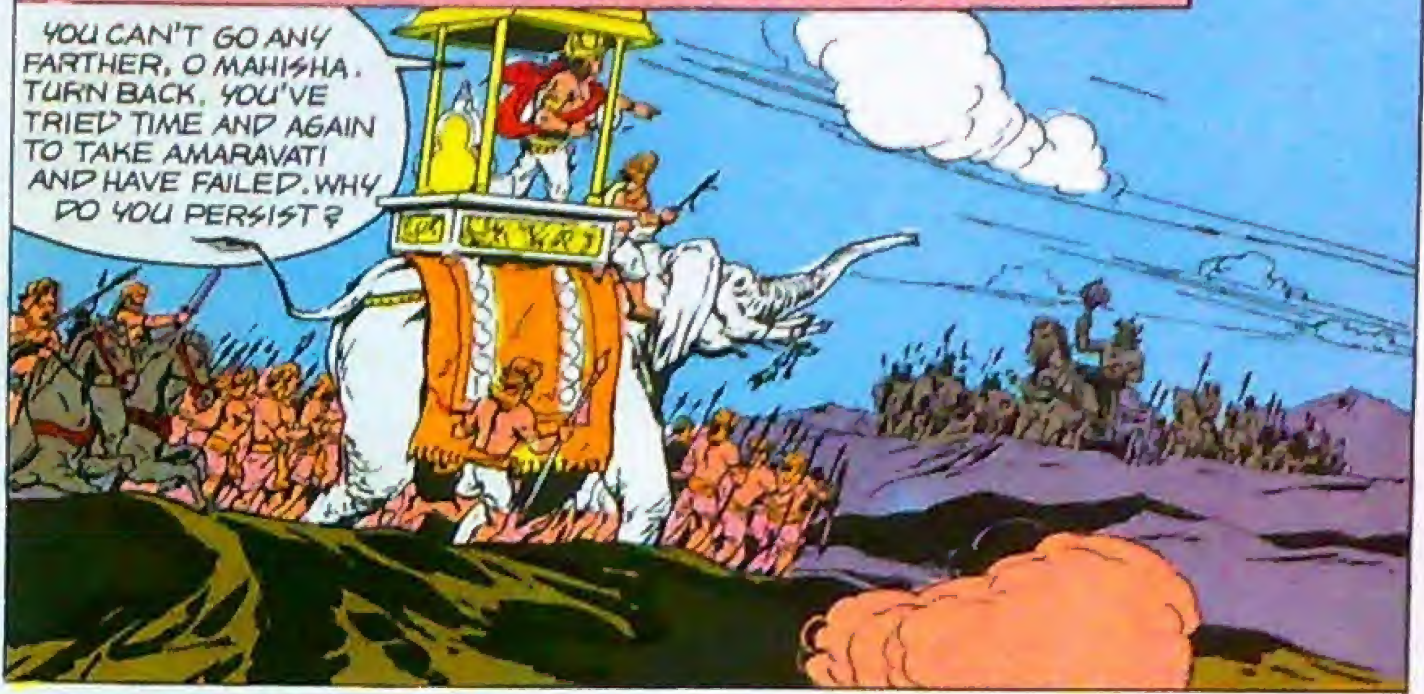






A LITTLE LATER, INDRA RUSHED OUT OF AMARAVATI, HIS CAPITAL.

YOU CAN'T GO ANY FARTHER, O MAHISHA. TURN BACK, YOU'VE TRIED TIME AND AGAIN TO TAKE AMARAVATI AND HAVE FAILED. WHY DO YOU PERSIST?

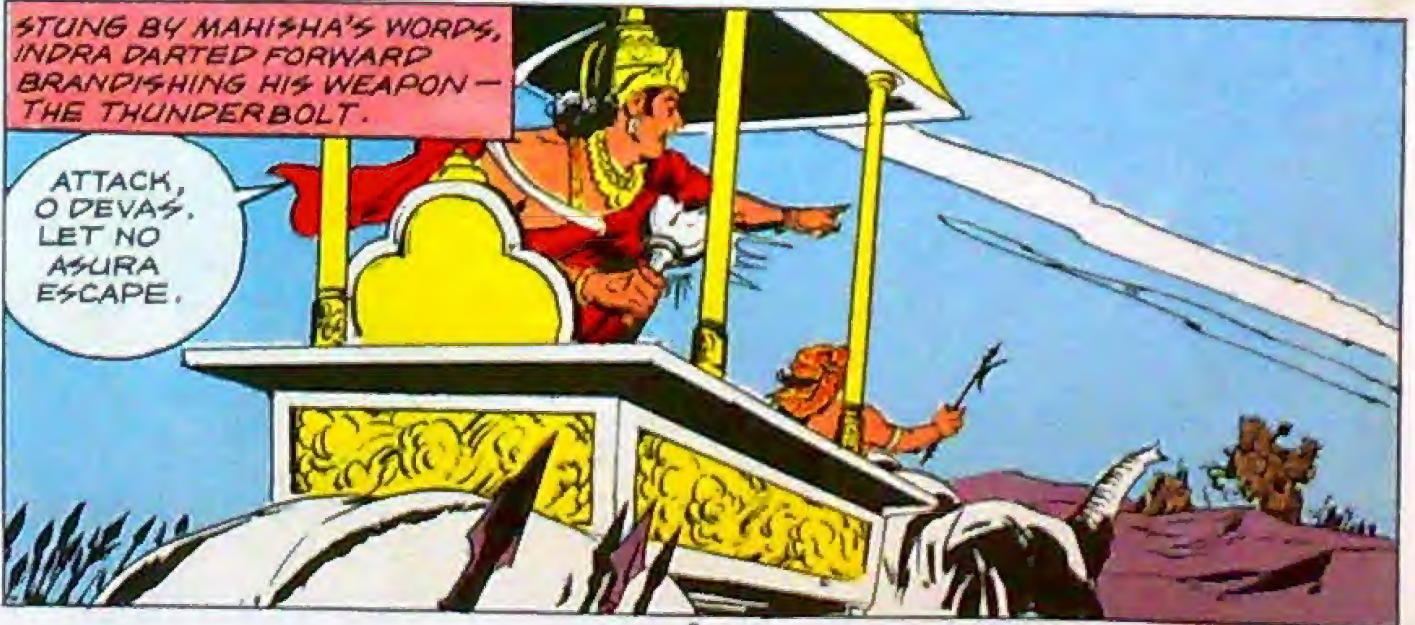


INDRA, I'VE COME TO FIGHT! NOT TO TALK. USE YOUR WEAPONS INSTEAD OF YOUR TONGUE!



STUNG BY MAHISHA'S WORDS, INDRA DARTED FORWARD BRANDISHING HIS WEAPON — THE THUNDERBOLT.

ATTACK, O DEVAS. LET NO ASURA ESCAPE.





THEN ENSUED A FIERCE BATTLE BETWEEN THE DEVAS AND THE ASURAS.



SEVERELY BEATEN, THE DEVAS HAD TO RUN FOR THEIR LIVES.



AFTER DRIVING THE DEVAS OUT OF AMARAVATI, MAHISHA ASCENDED INDRA'S THRONE.





MAHISHA'S MEN BEGAN TO HARASS THOSE PIOUS MEN WHO CONTINUED TO WORSHIP VISHNU OR SHIVA.



\* A FORM IN WHICH SHIVA IS WORSHIPPED



MEANWHILE, UNKNOWN TO THEM, THE DEVAS HAD ALREADY ASSEMBLED AT KAILAS, THE ABODE OF LORD SHIVA.

WE ARE HELPLESS AGAINST MAHISHA. WILL EVIL TRIUMPH OVER RIGHT-EOUSNESS?



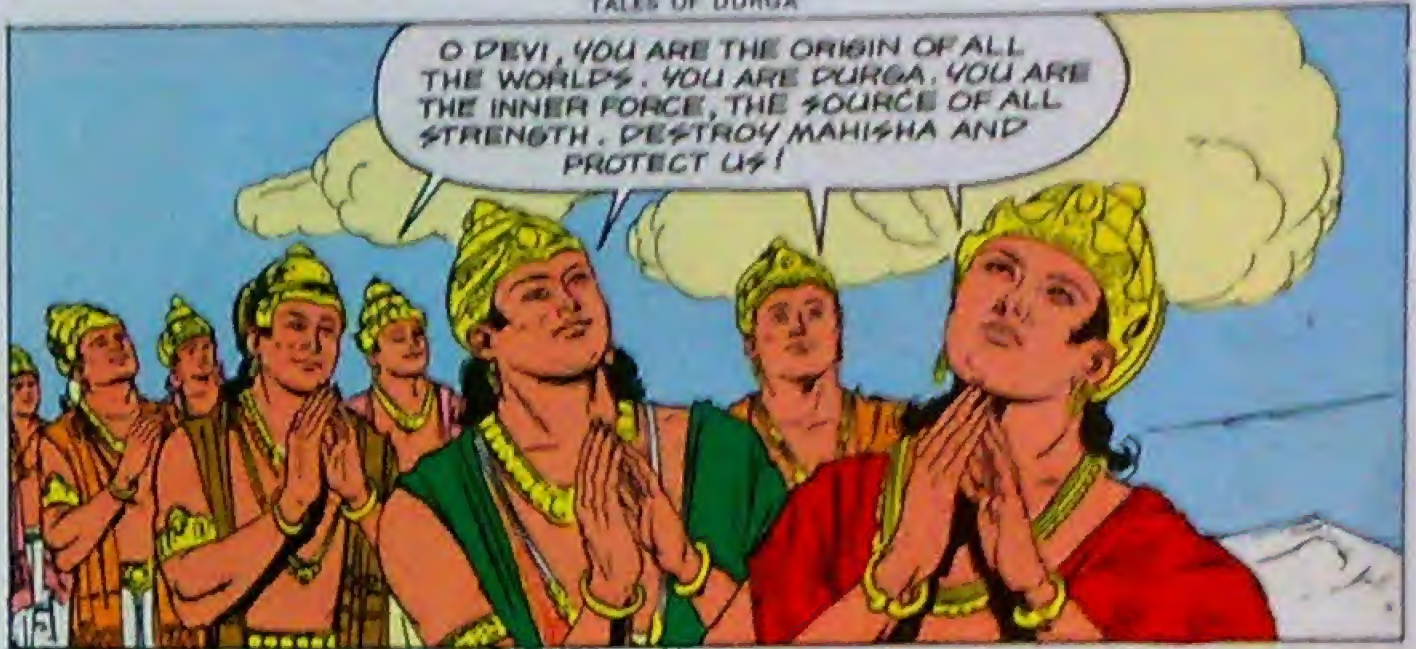
EVEN AS THE DEVAS SPOKE, AN INTENSE LIGHT ISSUED FORTH FROM THE ENRAGED FACES OF SHIVA, VISHNU AND BRAHMA.



IT WAS JOINED BY SIMILAR RAYS OF LIGHT FROM INDRA AND OTHER DEVAS. AND LO! THE NEXT MOMENT, OUT OF THAT LIGHT A FEMALE FORM WITH A THOUSAND ARMS CAME INTO BEING! IT WAS DEVI PURGA.





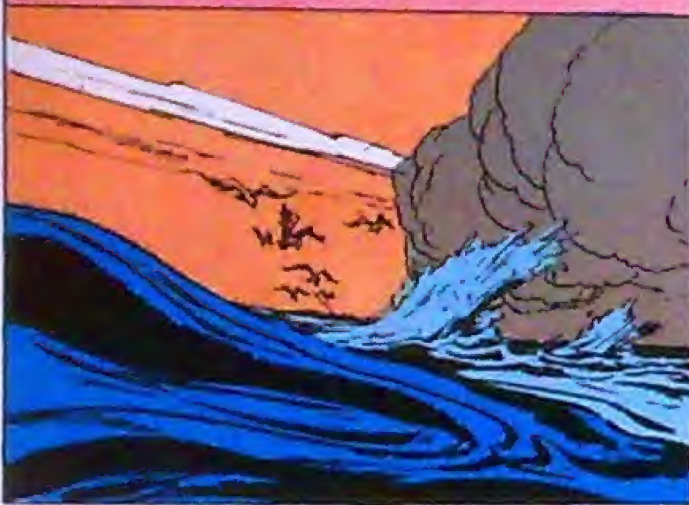




ARMED WITH THE CELESTIAL WEAPONS AND MOUNTED ON A LION, DURGA EMITTED A BLOOD-CURLING ROAR.



THE SEA TREMBLED...



...THE EARTH SHOOK AND THE MOUNTAINS ROCKED.



MAHISHA'S HEART MISSED A BEAT.





HE RUSHED OUT OF HIS PALACE TO FIND OUT.



NO! I AM NO MERE FEMALE! I HAVE COME TO FULFIL BRAHMA'S BOON. YOU WANTED TO DIE AT THE HANDS OF A WOMAN, DIDN'T YOU?

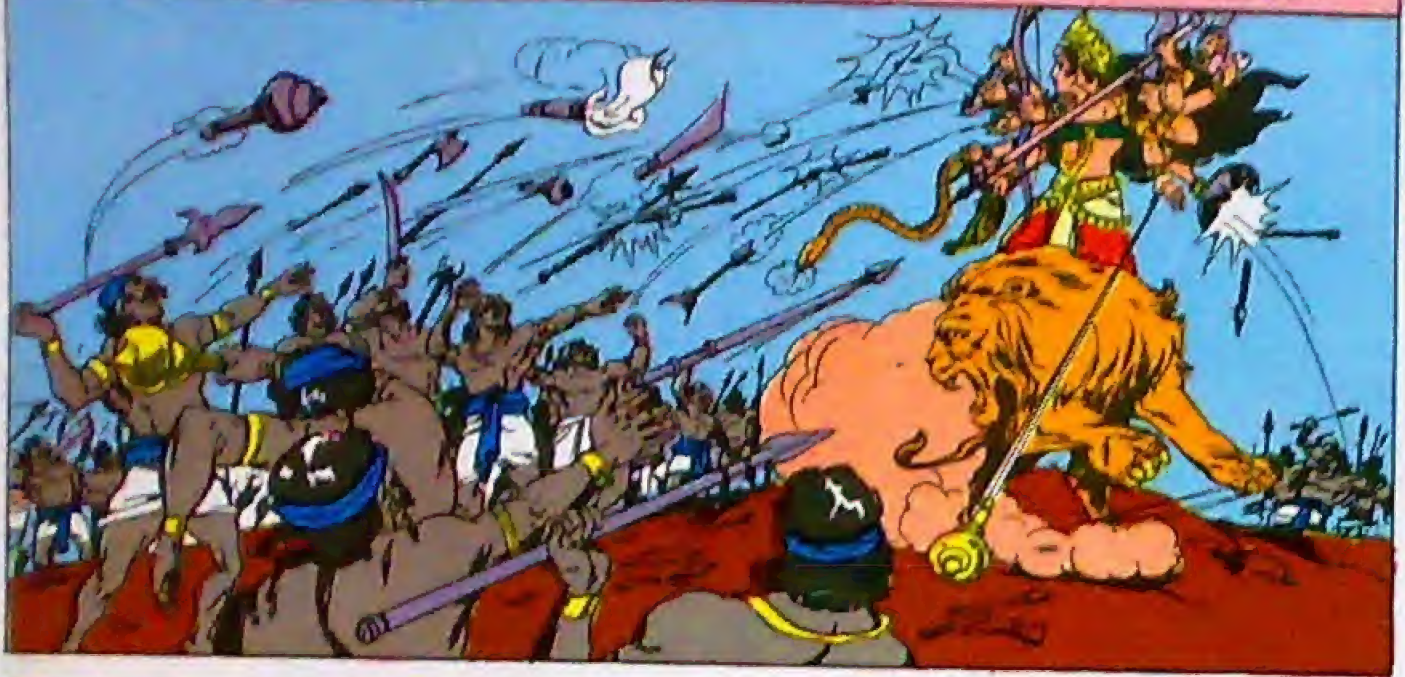


MAHISHA HASTILY STEPPED BACK AND CALLED TO HIS MEN.





AS THE ASURAS HURLED VARIOUS WEAPONS AT HER, DURGA BREATHED HARD.



AS SHE BREATHED, THOUSANDS OF SOLDIERS CAME INTO BEING AND FOUGHT AT HER SIDE.



HER MOUNT STRODE THROUGH MAHISHA'S ARMY, DESTROYING THOUSANDS OF ASURAS.



MAHISHA SEETHED WITH FURY.

I'LL  
ANNIHILATE  
THIS MONSTER  
'AND HER  
HORDES.

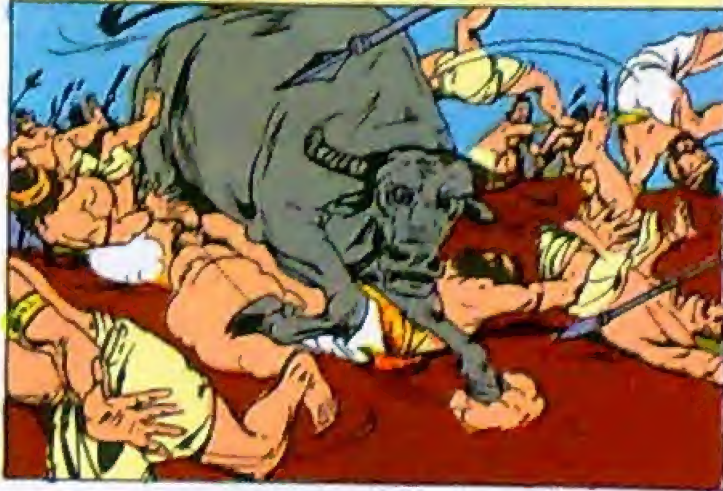




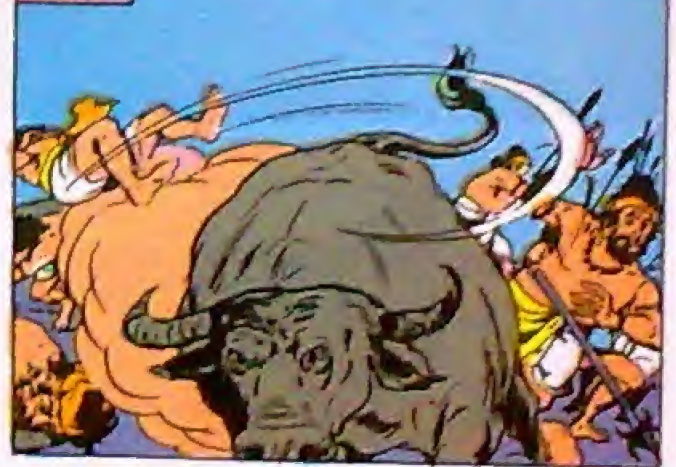
ASSUMING THE FORM OF A BUFFALO, MAHISHA CHARGED FORTH SNORTING AND BELLOWING.



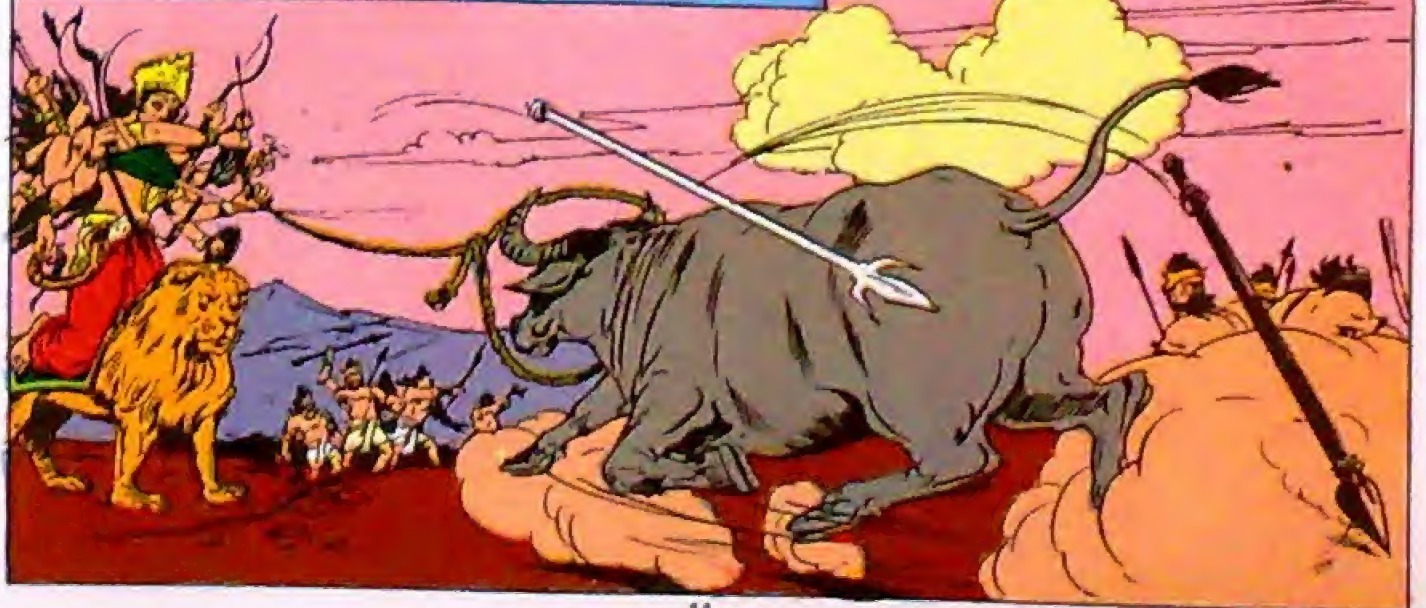
HE TRAMPLED UPON DURGA'S MEN...



...AND LASHED AT THEM WITH HIS TAIL.



ENRAGED, DURGA FLUNG A NOOSE AT HIM.





MAHISHA HOOK HIMSELF WITH  
ALL HIS MIGHT ...



... TRANSFORMED HIMSELF INTO A  
LION AND POUNCED UPON DURGA.



AS DURGA CHOPPED OFF THE  
HEAD OF THE LION ...



... MAHISHA ROSE IN HIS OWN  
FORM AND CHARGED.





LATER HE ASSUMED THE FORM OF AN ELEPHANT AND TUGGED AT DURGA'S MOUNT WITH HIS TRUNK.



DURGA LOOPEL OFF THE TRUNK WITH HER SWORD.



MAHISHA AGAIN ASSUMED THE FORM OF A BUFFALO AND ANORTED WITH RAGE.





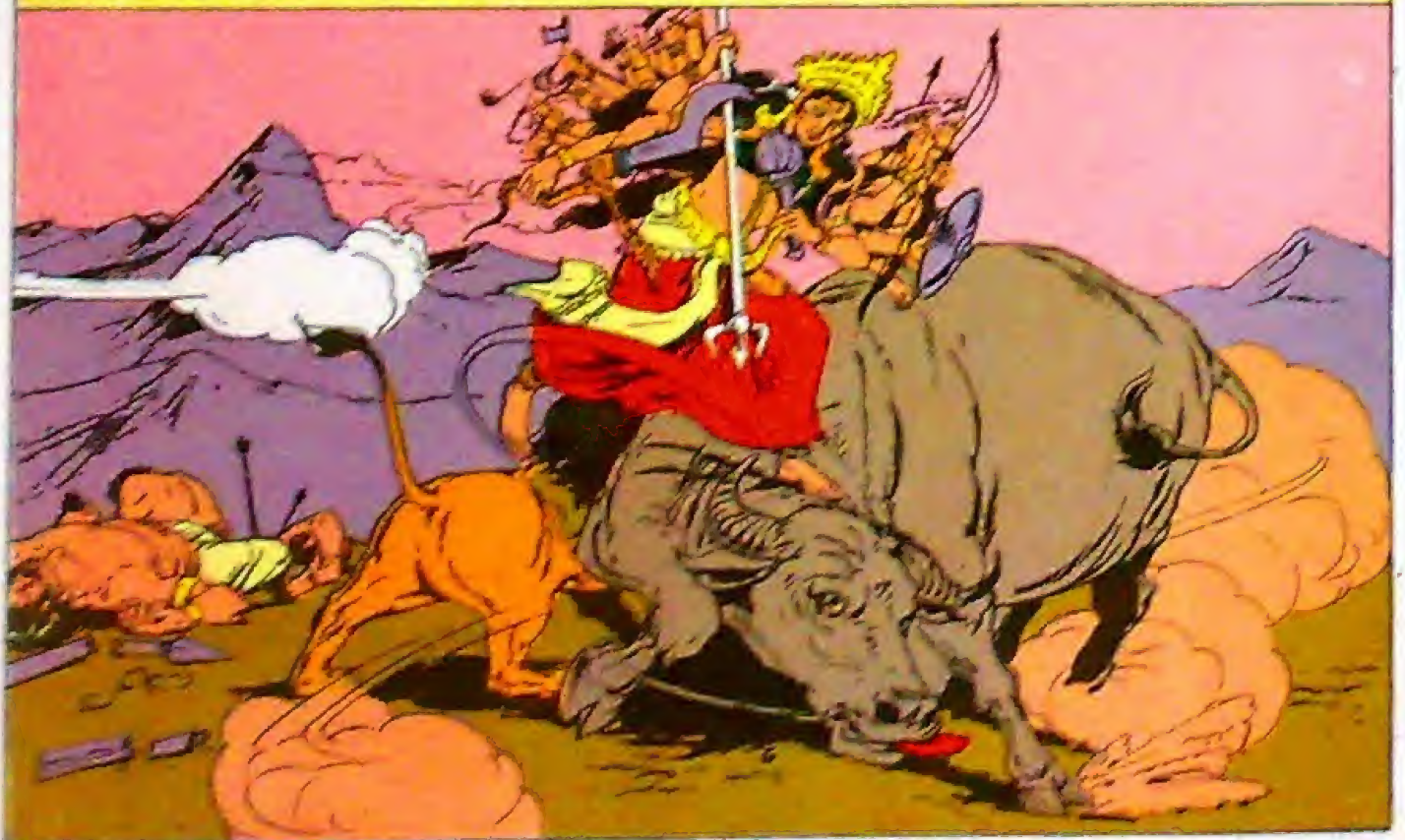
DURGA LOOKED AT HIM WITH CONTEMPT.



ENRAGED, MAHISHA RUSHED AT HER.



BUT DURGA LEAPT UPON HIM AND PINNED HIM DOWN.

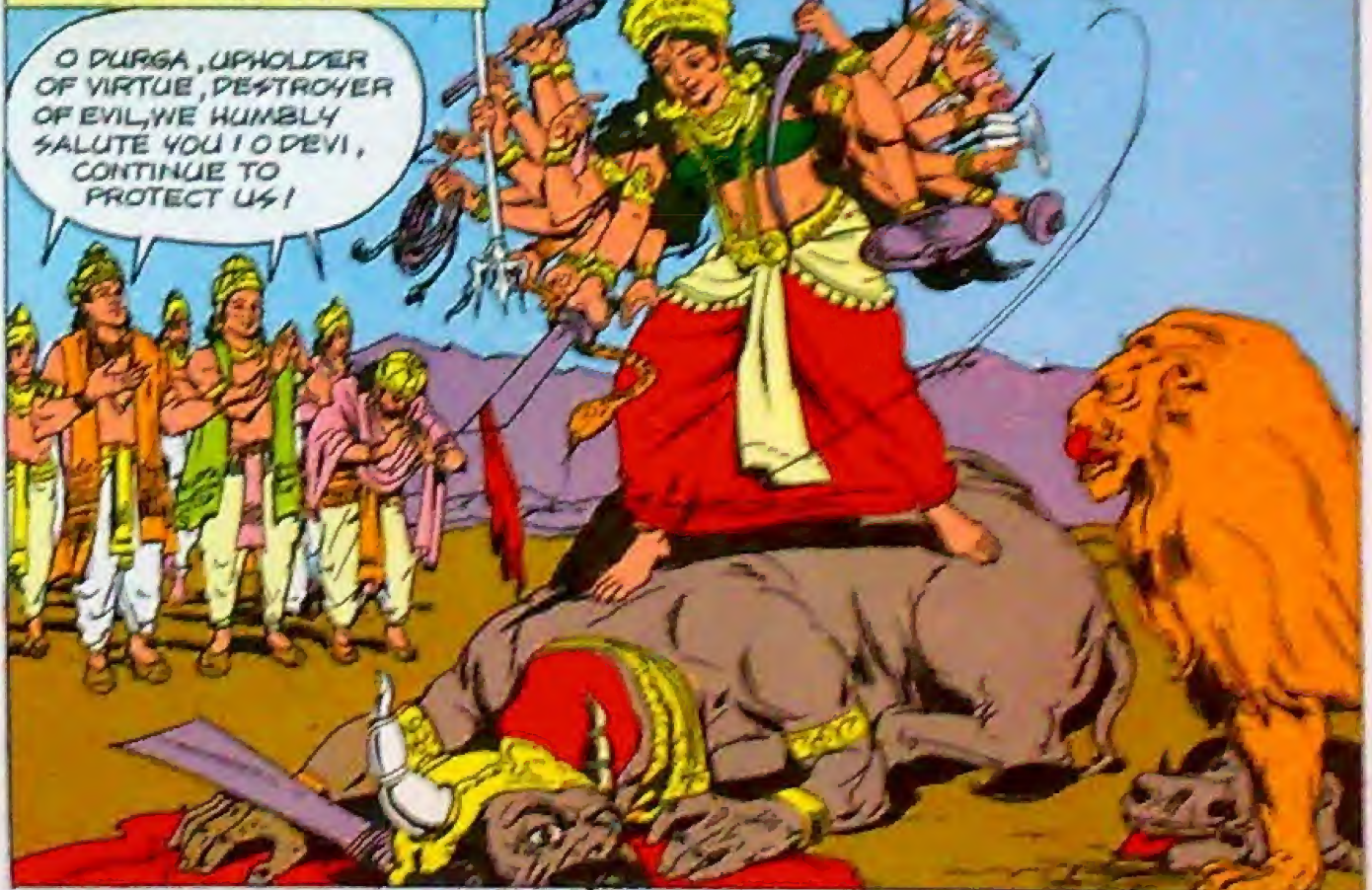




MAHISHA STRUGGLED TO FREE HIMSELF, AS HALF OF HIM EMERGED FROM THE MOUTH OF THE BUFFALO, DURGA RAISED HER SWORD.

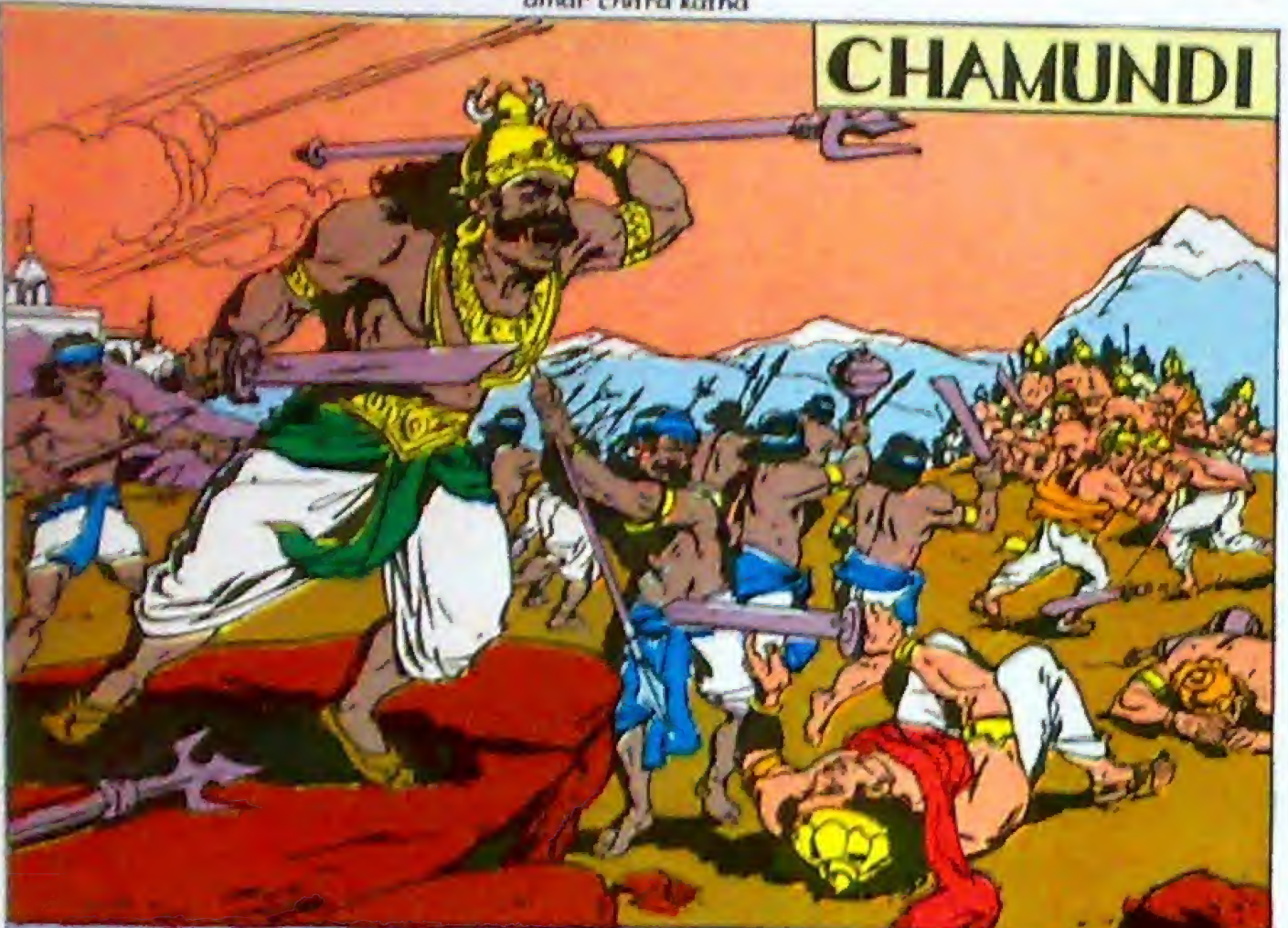


THE NEXT MOMENT, MAHISHA FELL DEAD, AT THE FOOT OF DURGA. THE DEVAS WERE OVERJOYED.





# CHAMUNDI



ON ANOTHER OCCASION, THE DEVAS WERE DRIVEN OUT OF HEAVEN BY SHUMBHA, THE LORD OF THE ASURAS.

CHANDA AND MUNDA, SHUMBHA'S COMMANDERS, FOLLOWED THE DEVAS.

LET'S FIND OUT WHERE THEY GO AND WHY.



THE DEVAS WENT TO MOUNT HIMAVAT AND PRAYED TO DURGA.

O DURGA, PROTECTOR OF THE VIRTUOUS, DESTROY THE EVIL SHUMBHA AND RESTORE RIGHTEOUSNESS.





JUST THEN PARVATI, SHIVA'S CONSORT, WHO WAS ON HER WAY TO THE RIVER, HAPPENED TO PASS BY.



AND LO! THE NEXT MOMENT, GODDESS AMBIKA\* SPRANG FORTH FROM THE BODY OF PARVATI.

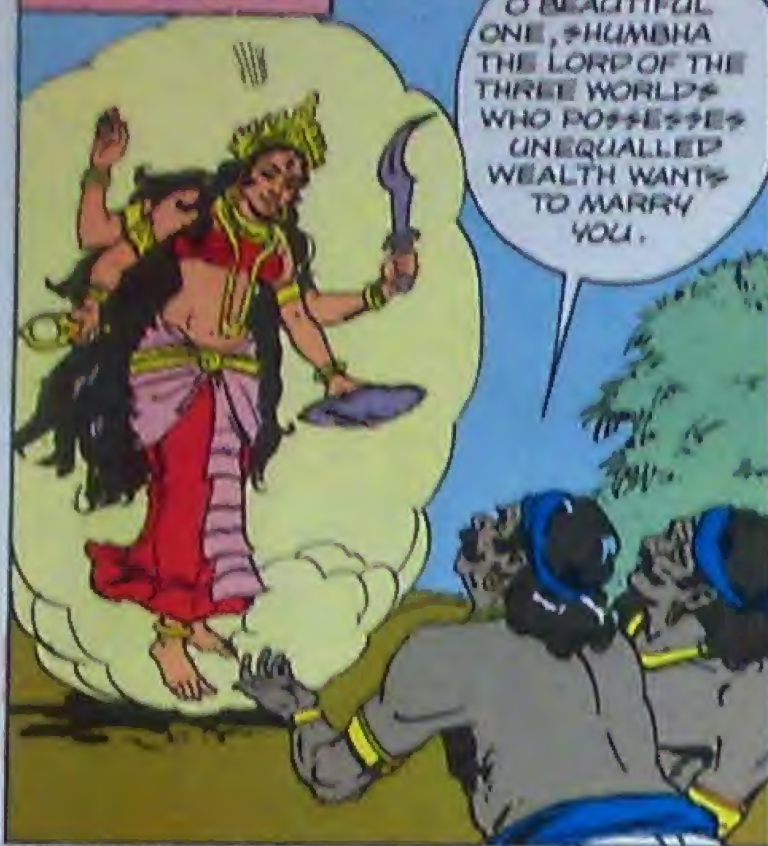


WHEN CHANDA AND MUNDA RUSHED TO THE PALACE OF SHUMBHA AND DESCRIBED AMBIKA TO HIM.



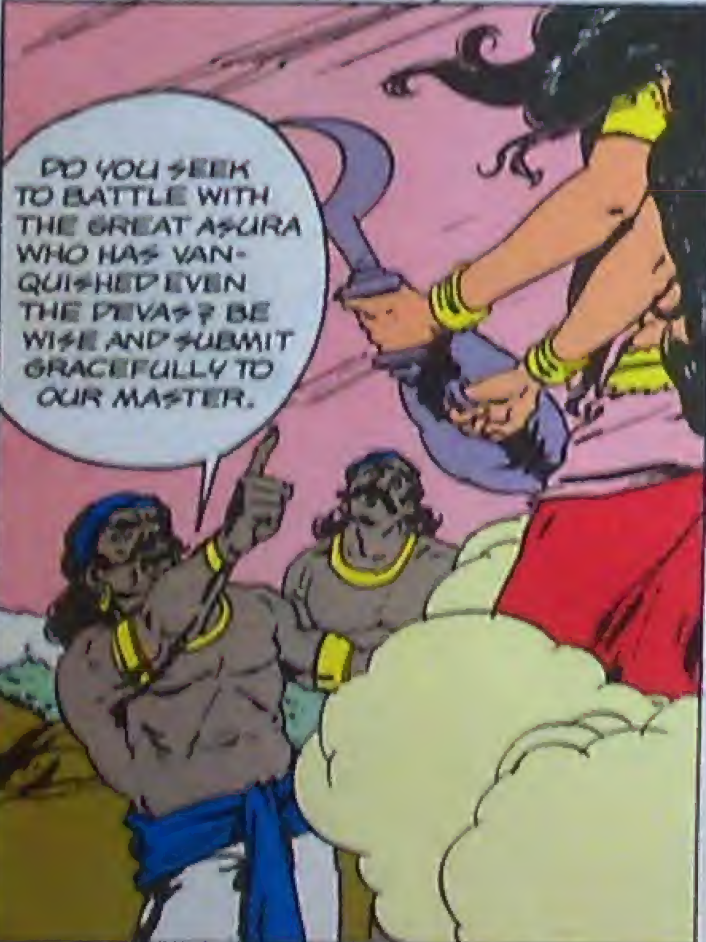


CHANDRA AND MUNDA RUSHED BACK TO MOUNT HIMALAY.



O BEAUTIFUL ONE, HUMBHA THE LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS WHO POSSESSES UNEQUALLED WEALTH WANTS TO MARRY YOU.

I'VE TAKEN A VOW THAT I'LL MARRY ONLY HIM WHO CAN CONQUER ME IN BATTLE AND HUMBLE MY PRIDE.



DO YOU SEEK TO BATTLE WITH THE GREAT ASURA WHO HAS VANQUISHED EVEN THE DEVAS? BE WISE AND SUBMIT GRACEFULLY TO OUR MASTER.

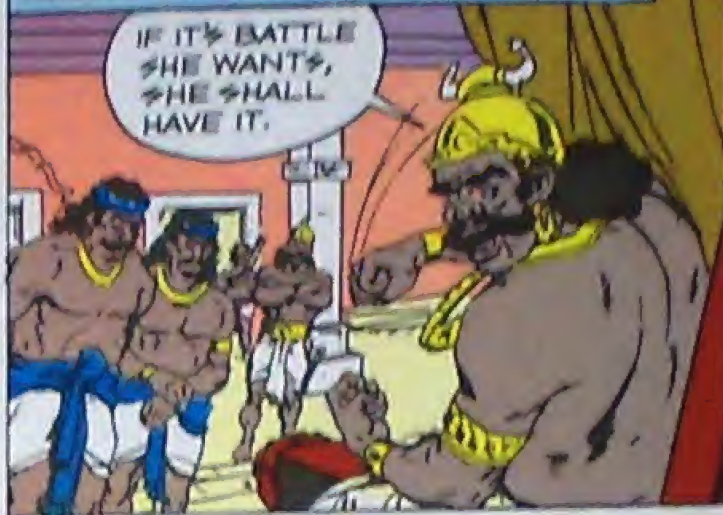
I KNOW I AM FOOLISH BUT I AM BOUND BY THE ILL-CONSIDERED VOW TAKEN LONG AGO.

WE'LL INFORM OUR MASTER.





WHEN CHANDA AND MUNDA CONVEYED AMBIKA'S MESSAGE TO SHUMBHA —



THEN HE TURNED TO ANOTHER OF HIS COMMANDERS, DHUMRALOCHANA.



DHUMRALOCHANA TOOK AN ARMY TO MOUNT HIMAVAT AND CONFRONTED AMBIKA.



AMBIKA PRETENDED TO BE AFRAID.



THEN MARRY OUR LORD!





WITHOUT WASTING ANOTHER WORD, PHUMRALOCHANA RUSHED TOWARDS HER.



WITH UTTER CONTEMPT FOR THE ASURA, AMBIKA UTTERED A SINGLE SYLLABLE.

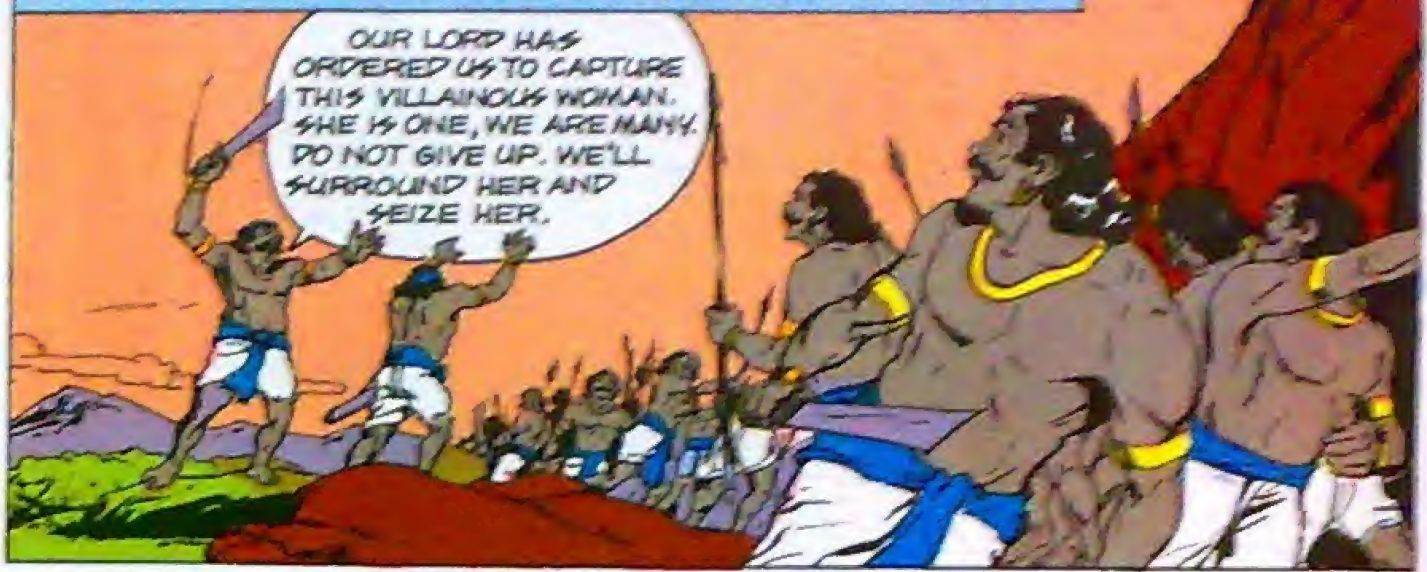


THE NEXT MOMENT, A HANDFUL OF ASHES SMOULDERED WHERE THE MIGHTY ASURA ONCE STOOD.





BUT CHANDA AND MUNDA STOPPED THE RETREATING ASURAS.



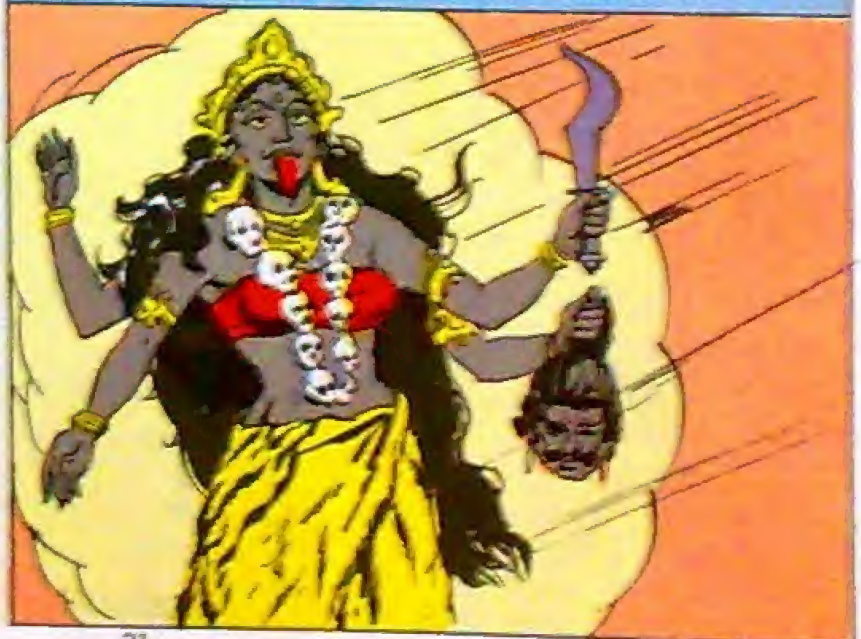
WHEN THE ASURAS CLOSED IN ON AMBIKA, WHO WAS NOW SEATED ON A LION...



...SHE FROWNED.



OUT CAME KALI\* FROM HER FOREHEAD...



\* AN INCARNATION OF DURGA



... AND CHARGED AT THE ASURAS.



SNATCHING AN ELEPHANT WITH ONE HAND. . .



... SHE HURLED IT AT THE ASURAS AND CRUSHED THEM TO DEATH.





CHANDA RUSHED AT KALI.



KALI SEIZED HIM BY THE HAIR...



BLIND WITH FURY, MUNDA RUSHED FORTH.



AMBIKA SMILED AT KALI.





# HOW DURGA SLEW SHUMBHA



THEN THE SHAKTIS — THE INNER FORCE OF VARIOUS GODS — ISSUED FORTH ASSUMING FEMALE FORMS\*. OUT OF BRAHMA EMERGED BRAHMANI...



\* EACH OF THESE FORMS IS CONSIDERED TO BE AN INCARNATION OF DURGA



... OUT OF VISHNU, VAISHNAVI ...



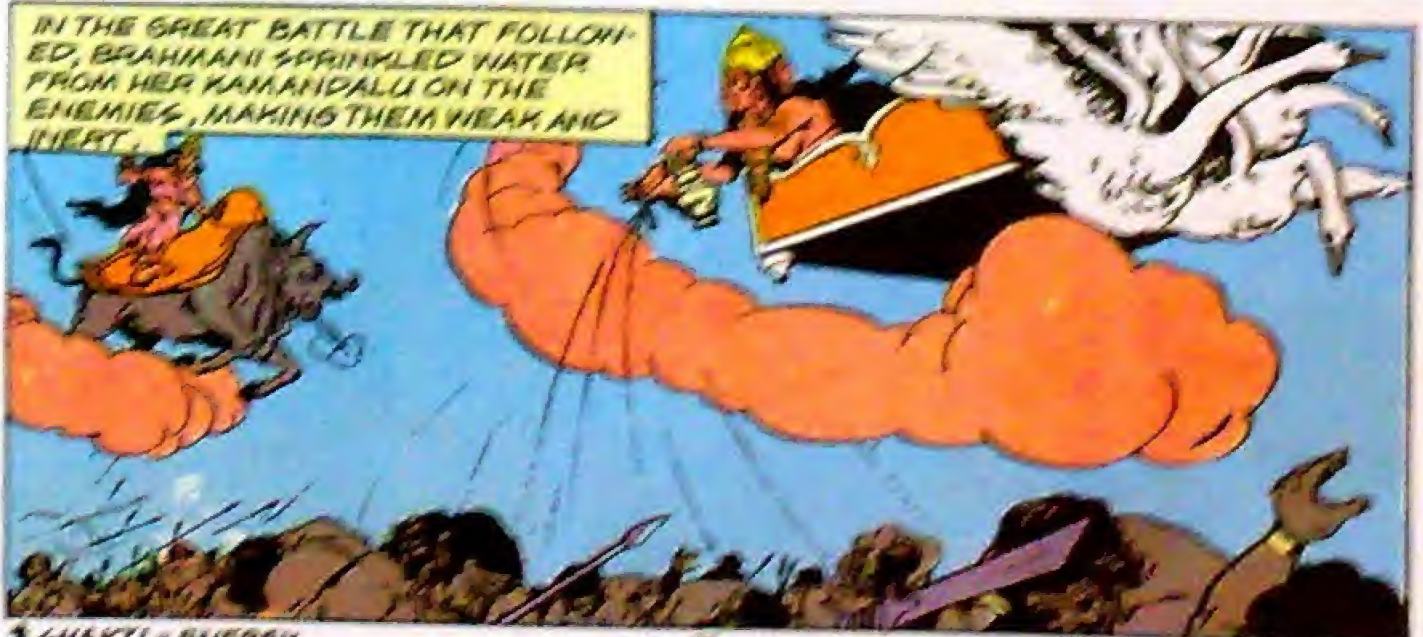
... AND OUT OF MAHESHWARA, MAHESHWARI.



FINALLY OUT OF AMBIKA EMERGED CHANDIKA. SOON THE SKY WAS FILLED WITH HUNDREDS OF SHAKTIS.



IN THE GREAT BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED, BRAHMANI SPRINKLED WATER FROM HER KAMANDALI ON THE ENEMIES, MAKING THEM WEAK AND INERT.





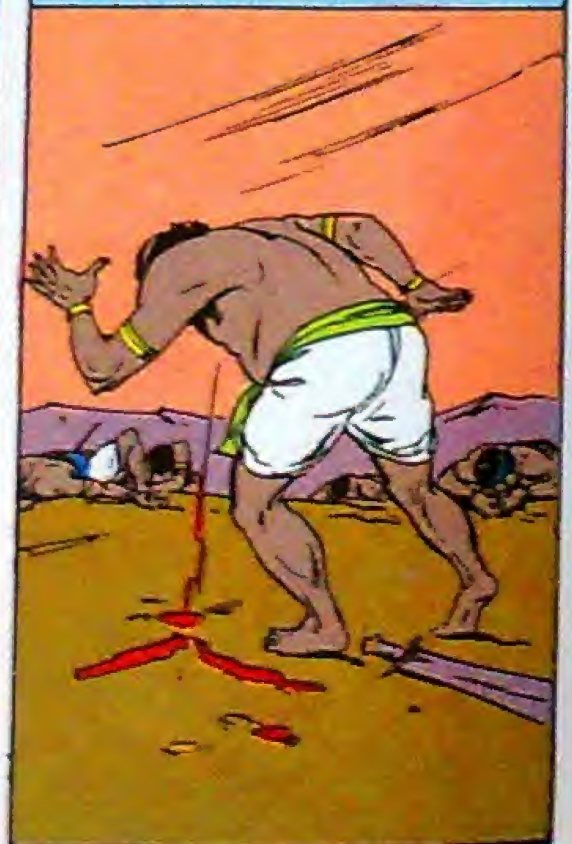
VAISHNAVI FOUGHT WITH THE DISCUS, MAHESHWARI WITH THE TRIDENT, AND VARIOUS OTHER SHAKTIS WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE WEAPONS. UNABLE TO FACE THIS ONSLAUGHT, THE ASURAS BEGAN TO FLEE.



AS RAKTABEEJA RUSHED FORTH, INDRA'S SHAKTI STRUCK HIM WITH HER THUNDERBOLT.



AS EACH DROP OF THE BLOOD FLOWING FROM HIS WOUND TOUCHED THE GROUND...





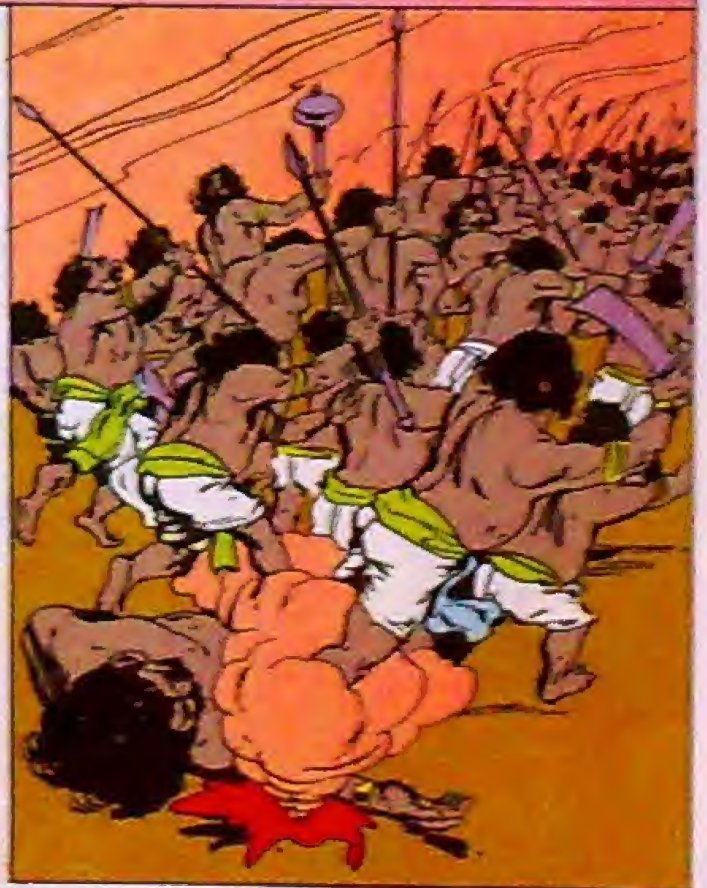
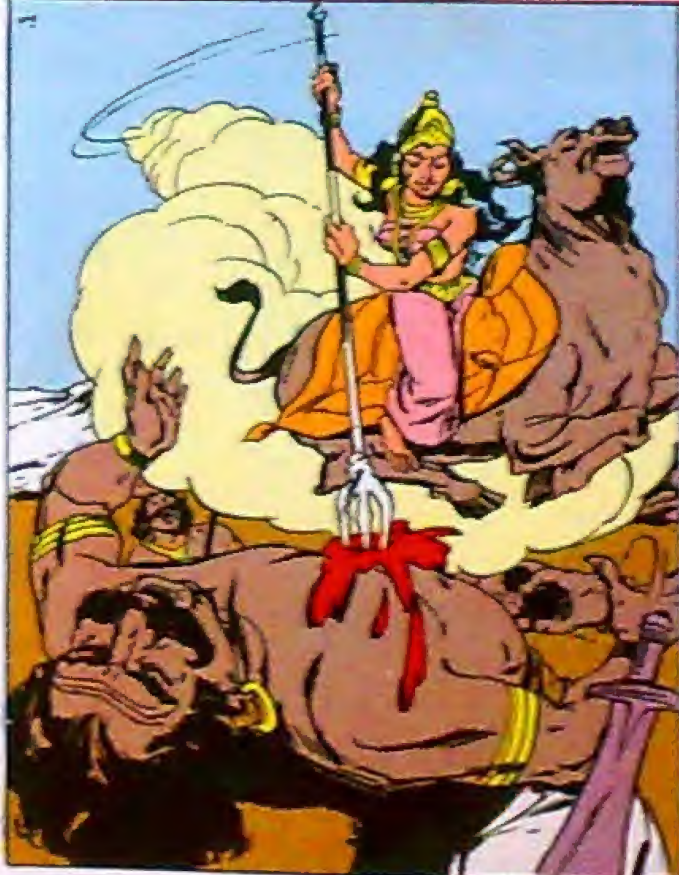
... THERE ROSE A MIGHTY ASURA,  
HIS EXACT REPLICA ...



... TO FIGHT THE SHAKTIS.



AS THE SHAKTIS WOUNDED EACH OF THE ASURAS THUS BORN, OUT OF HIS  
BLOOD ROSE MANY MORE ASURAS ...





... AND SOON THE BATTLE SCENE WAS FILLED WITH THOUSANDS OF RAKTA-BEEJAS, WHO FOUGHT THE SHAKTIS.



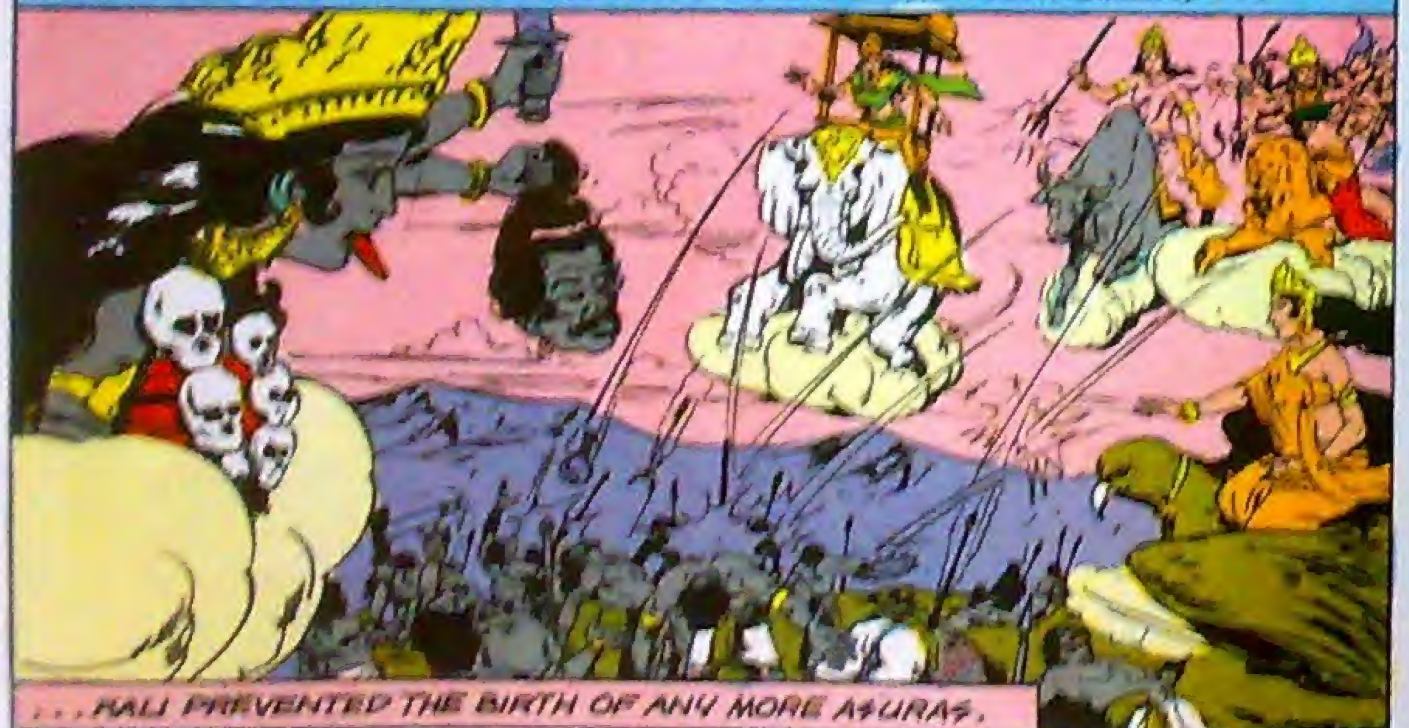
CHANDIKA TURNED TO KALI.

O CHAMUNDI,  
THESE RAKTA-  
BEEJAS CAN BE  
ANNIHILATED ONLY  
IF WE PREVENT  
THEIR BLOOD FROM  
FALLING TO  
THE GROUND.

LEAVE IT TO  
ME. NOT A DROP  
OF THEIR BLOOD  
SHALL STAIN  
THE EARTH  
AGAIN.



AS CHANDIKA AND THE OTHER SHAKTIS ATTACKED THE RAKTABEEJAS...



... KALI PREVENTED THE BIRTH OF ANY MORE ASURAS.



SOON THE HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS OF RAKTABEEJAS THAT HAD ARISEN WERE WIPE OUT. RAKTABEEJA WAS FURIOUS.



AND RAKTABEEJA RUSHED TOWARDS CHANDIKA.



AS CHANDIKA STRUCK HIM . . .



... AND RAKTABEEJA FELL DEAD, TO THE JOY OF THE DEVAS.









THEN TO THE AMAZEMENT OF KALINGNA, THE VARIOUS SHAKTS MERGED INTO DURGA.



HOLDING DURGA, KALINGNA RODE INTO THE BAY.



AFTER A FIERCE BATTLE IN MID-AIR, DURGA FLUNG THE ASURA PONY...



...AND KLEN HIM WITH HER SPEAR. REJOICING, THE DEVYs HEARD BY INDRA APPEARED ON THE SCENE.



WE SALUTE YOU, O MOTHER DURGA, DESTROYER OF EVIL.





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